

# Wolveridge's "Speculum Matricis" (1671), with Notes on Two MS. Copies in the Society's Library.

By HERBERT R. SPENCER, M.D.

WOLVERIDGE'S *Speculum Matricis* or *The Expert Midwives Handmaid* is one of the rarest books on midwifery; indeed no less an authority than Dr. Aveling feared that what he described as "the earliest original work on midwifery in the English language" has been irretrievably lost.<sup>1</sup> It was one of the earliest works on midwifery to appear in English, the first (original) work being the translation (1659) of Harvey's *De Generatione Animalium* (1651). The *Speculum Matricis* has little claim to originality and is not quite so rare as Aveling at first thought, for afterwards<sup>2</sup> he was informed that there was a copy in the Radford Library at Manchester, and another was at Capel, Surrey, in the possession of Mr. John Lee Jardine, who presented it to the Royal College of Surgeons. It is now in the Royal College of Surgeons Library, stamped with the date of its reception, 11 July, 88. It is bound in leather, is smaller than the Radford Library copy, having been somewhat cut down, so that it only measures 5½ in. by 3¼ in. It has twenty-eight preliminary leaves, including the two-compartment frontispiece by Cross, and consists of 156 printed pages, pages 144 and 145 and pages 159 to 166 being copied in manuscript from the Radford Library copy.<sup>3</sup> It contains eight plates and twenty-one illustrations in the text. There is no copy of the book in the libraries of the British Museum, the Surgeon-General (Washington) or the Royal College of Physicians, London. There is a perfect printed copy of the *Speculum Matricis*<sup>4</sup> in the library of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, and so far as I know the only other printed copies (both imperfect) known to exist at the present time are those mentioned, viz., the copy in the library of the Royal College of Surgeons and that in the Radford Library of St. Mary's Hospital, Manchester. Through the kindness of the staff of the latter institution and especially of Dr. Fletcher Shaw, who sent me the book for inspection and has furnished me with a photograph of the title-page, I am able to exhibit it.

The Radford Library copy is a small octavo volume (6 in. by 3¼ in.) bound in contemporary leather (somewhat rubbed and worn) and wants the two-compartment frontispiece. It has twenty-seven preliminary leaves, 166 pages, twenty-one engravings in the text and eight separate plates. Although the author in his address to the reader, says that the book was "never intended for the Irish" he published it with the title *Speculum Matricis Hibernicum, or the Irish Midwives Handmaid*, London, 1670. Of this work there is a copy in the Bodleian Library, and I recently saw another copy (with the date torn from the title-page) in a bookseller's catalogue, but was too late to secure it, being forestalled by my friend, Professor Essen-Möller, of Lund, Sweden. Although the *Speculum Matricis Hibernicum* is dated 1670 it seems probable that it was printed after the English edition.

The *Speculum Matricis* or *The Expert Midwives Handmaid* contains little which is original and I find that for the most part it is a sheer plagiarism<sup>5</sup> from

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. Obst. Soc. Lond.*, xxvi, 31.

<sup>2</sup> *Brit. Med. Journ.* 1884 (i), 435.

<sup>3</sup> J. B. Bailey, *Athenæum*, Nov. 17, 1888, 667.

<sup>4</sup> I am indebted to Mr. Graham, the librarian of the Royal College of Physicians, Edinburgh, for particulars of this copy, which is perfect and has the two-compartment frontispiece.

<sup>5</sup> Plagiarism appears to have been rife at this period and sometimes led to legal proceedings; as in the case of Rider's Dictionary concerning which Thomas Fuller (*The Worthies of England*, 1662) writes: "Such plagiary-ship ill becometh authors and printers and, the dove being the crest of the stationers' armes, should mind them not, like rooks, to filch copies one from another."

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*The Expert Midwife*, an English translation of Rueff's *De Generatione Hominum* (1580, &c.) which was published in 1637. An appearance of originality is given by casting Rueff's work into the form of a dialogue between Dr. Philadelphos

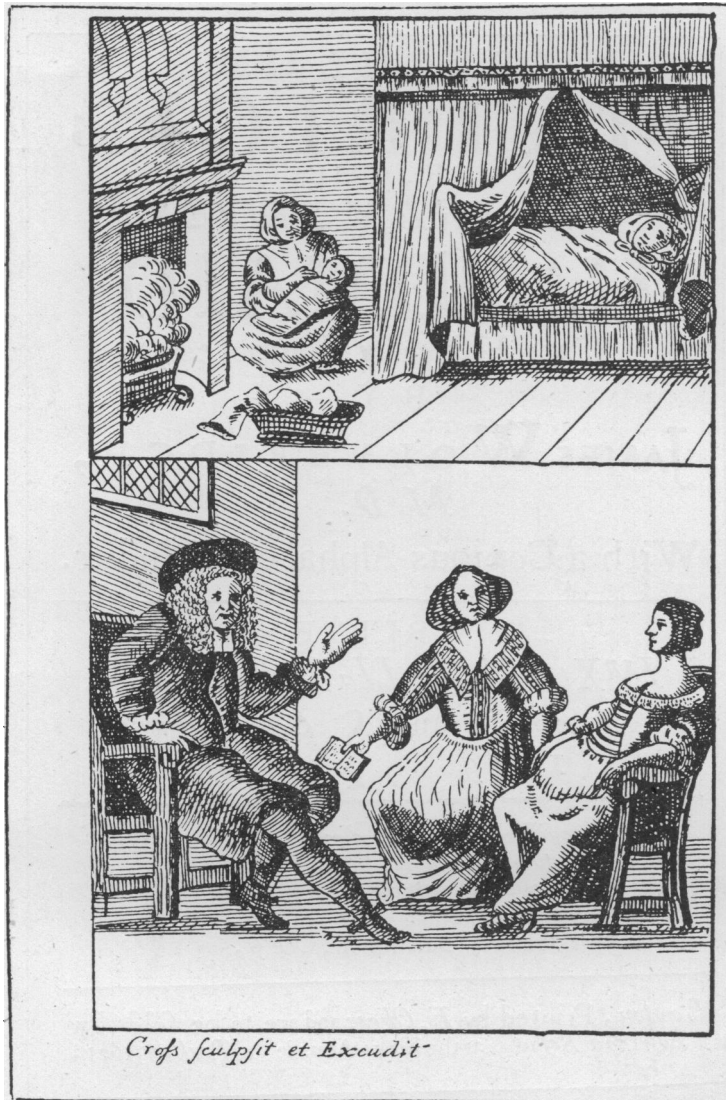


FIG. 1.—Pen-and-ink copy, by John Lee Jardine, of the Frontispiece of Wolveridge's *Speculum Matricis* (1671). The doctor in the lower compartment is said to be Wolveridge. From the MS. copy in the Society's Library.

and Mrs. Eutrapelia, the midwife. The illustrations also are taken from Rueff, who in turn had copied them from Rösslin (*Rosengarten*, 1513).

The frontispiece of the *Speculum Matricis*, engraved by Cross, appears to be

original. It has two compartments; the upper representing a lying-in chamber with the lying-in patient, the midwife and the infant; the lower representing the doctor (supposed to be the author) wearing wig and hat and addressing the pregnant

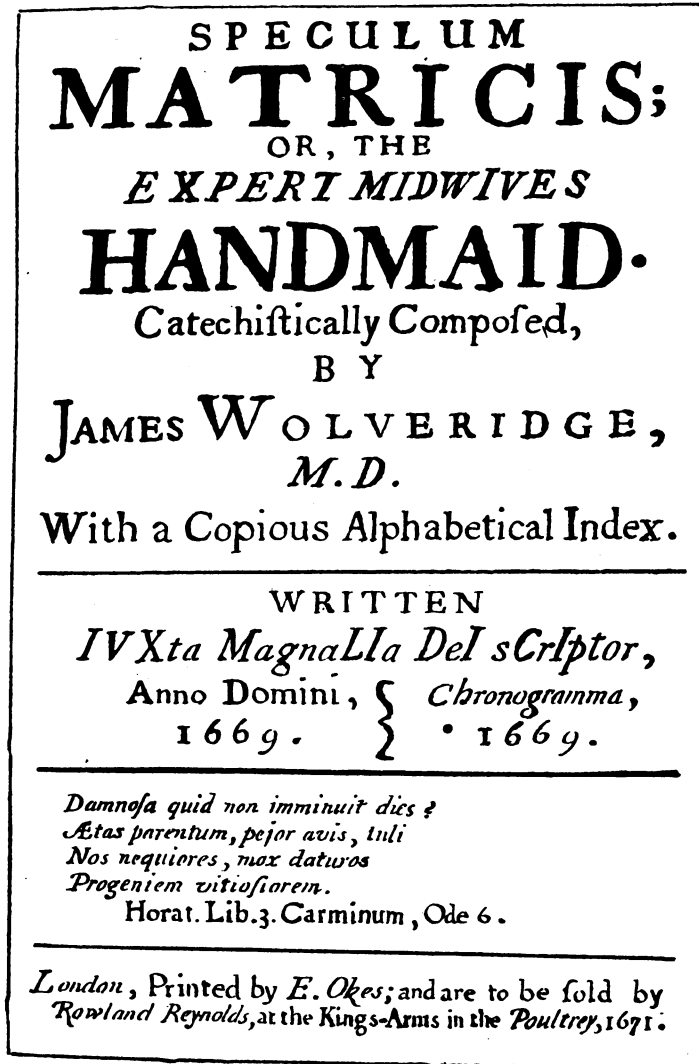


FIG. 2.—Pen-and-ink copy, by John Lee Jardine, of the Title-page of Wolveridge's *Speculum Matricis* (1671). The final "t" has been omitted in "tulit" in the *Horatian ode*.

patient and the midwife, who holds a book (no doubt the *Speculum Matricis*) in her hand.

This frontispiece is interesting also because it appears in an anonymous work entitled "*The English midwife, enlarged*, containing Directions for Midwives

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&c., &c., the whole fitted for the meanest capacities. Illustrated with near 40 copper cuts London, Printed for Rowland Reynolds next door to the Golden Bottle in the Strand at the Middle Exchange door, 1682."

The preface to *The English midwife, enlarged*, addressed "to all English midwives," says:—

"You are here presented with an amendment and supplement of what was necessary and yet wanting in this book formerly: so that you will find it to be wholly completed for your purpose, in every respect: it being altogether grounded upon many years' experience and observation in the practice of deliveries: most others being written by those that never practised the art: and some fathered upon persons that were no more concerned in them than the Pope of Rome; such as Sir Theodore de Mayern, Dr. Chamberlen and others, by the Publishers of the *Compleat Midwives Practice*,<sup>1</sup> so that I may justly say of this book, as the learned Sir Richard Baker says of his chronicle, that if all others were not to be found this alone were sufficient, with your diligence &c., &c."

*The English Midwife enlarged* is copied in great part from Wolveridge's *Speculum Matricis*. The writer even adopts the catechistical method of Dr. Philadelphos and Mrs. Eutrapelia. The order of the chapters is somewhat altered and there are verbal omissions and insertions; but in the main it is a copy of Wolveridge's work, without any acknowledgment of that author. Probably it was in the hands of the publisher Reynolds, who also sold the *Speculum Matricis*, and (? after the death of Wolveridge) thought it was an opportunity for bringing out a new edition. The title suggests that the book had formerly been published as *The English Midwife*, but I cannot find any record of the book bearing that title and the contents of *The English Midwife Enlarged* show that the former book was the *Speculum Matricis*.

The author of the *Speculum Matricis*, James Wolveridge, was an Englishman practising in Cork. Sir Charles Cameron, in his *History of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland*, states:—

"His name appears, but with a 'J' before it, in Belcher's List of the Fraternity of Physicians, Trinity Hall, Dublin, established in 1660. I find the name 'James Wolveridge, M.D., 1664,' in Dr. Todd's Roll of Graduates of the University of Dublin."

Thus the author was a graduate of but five years' standing at the time of writing the book (1669).

It begins with a chapter by The Author to The Reader, signed James Wolveridge, from my Study in Cork, January 12, 1669.

The book is not intended for the Irish but for the English, "his countrey-folk"; then comes an English ode by Jonathan Ashe e Coll. Oriell, Oxon, "To his deserving friend Dr. James Wolveridge," followed by a Latin ode by the author on his book: to this succeeds an English ode by Aquila Smyth, M.D., "on the Praise, and the happy delivery of James Wolveridge, Dr of Physick, in his labours on the Labour of Women, etc."; then follows an Encomiastichon in Latin addressed to the author by Jonathan Ashe; another, also in Latin, by Daniel Colman; then an ode in English by the author to his book and an Acrostick to Wolveridge by his obliged friend Richard Sampson.

The author reproduces Harvey's account of the unaided delivery of the wife of the soldier on the march, but he does not seem to have read Harvey's work (*De Generatione Animalium*) appreciatively, for he says "from whence it appears the liver to be a congealed and concrete blood"! The chapters on Anatomy and Development of the foetus, as also the illustrations, are taken from Rueff;

<sup>1</sup>*The Compleat Midwives Practice*, 1656, and *The Compleat Midwives Practice Enlarged*, 1659, by R.C.I.D.M.S.T.B.: the second edition corrected: in this edition the names of Sir Theodore Mayern, Dr. Chamberlen and Mr. Nich. Culpepper are mentioned on the title-page.

Section V and onwards contains the Dialogue between Eutrapelia, the Midwife, and Philadelphos, the Doctor.

At p. 78 appears the following:—

Dr. Philadelphos (addressing Mrs. Eutrapelia):

"Having thus run through births, as well natural as præternatural, I shall give you the reason (and that in my own opinion) why these births are of so various and different postures in the womb, observing not alwaies the same posture: and 'tis thus. Because the infant swimming in water and moving itself, sometimes this way, sometimes that way and is bent and tumbled several waies; insomuch, that sometimes it is strangely entangled with its own navil-cord, which I am confident you have seen in your own experience oftentimes."

This is taken almost verbatim, without acknowledgment, from W. Harvey's *Generation of Living Creatures*, 1653, p. 471.

"For he swimmeth in a water, and moveth himself to and fro, he stretcheth himself now this way and anon that, and so is variously inflected and tumbled up and down; in so much that sometimes, being entangled in his own Navel-string, he is strangely insnared."

Wolveridge throws some light on the contemporary management of the puerperium, for he advises:—

"That women be kept in their beds for five daies at least after their delivery. I know 'tis usual for them to rise at three daies; but this to be sure the longer women contein themselves in their bed the more secure they are from danger."

So much for James Wolveridge and his printed book.

The main object of the present communication is to call attention to the fact that in the Obstetrical Society's Library, now incorporated with the Library of the Royal Society of Medicine, we possess two MS. copies of this rare work, one indifferently written and the other, made by one who modestly signs his initials J. L. J., a beautiful specimen of penmanship and draughtsmanship which make it one of the treasures of our Library. I purpose to give some account of the origin and author of this magnificent manuscript copy of a very rare book.

In the year 1884 a copy of the printed work was known to be in the possession of Dr. Fordyce Barker, of New York, and the Obstetrical Society of London had endeavoured to obtain a manuscript copy of the book. But Dr. Aveling reported<sup>1</sup> that:—

"The attempt of the Society to obtain a transcript of James Wolveridge's work on Midwifery, Dublin, 1670,<sup>2</sup> had failed, the man whom Dr. Fordyce Barker had employed to copy the book having absconded<sup>3</sup> with the volume and died in Europe. By this loss of the only known copy of Wolveridge's work it is feared the earliest original work on Midwifery in the English language has been irretrievably lost."

*Extracts from Minutes of the Council of the Obstetrical Society of London.*

April 2, 1884, meeting.

"Two letters were read, one from Dr. Fordyce Barker, thanking the Society for a cheque for £5 sent him to procure the copying of a rare work (*Speculum Matricis*) and stating that the copyist having disappeared with the book and then died (as reported) he had been unable to get it copied; he returned the cheque. A letter from Dr. Wiltshire on the same subject was read."

April 28, 1884, meeting.

"Dr. Aveling proposed that a M.S. copy of Wolveridge's *Speculum Matricis* be made and that Dr. Cullingworth be empowered to incur the necessary expense."

<sup>1</sup> *Trans. Obst. Soc. Lond.*, 1884, xxvi, 31.

<sup>2</sup> It should have been London, 1671.

<sup>3</sup> From information furnished by Dr. Clement Godson it appears that the copyist, a Frenchman named Bourgeaud, did not abscond, but died in great poverty in New York before the copying was completed. *Brit. Med. Journ.*, March 1, 1884.

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*July 2, 1884, meeting.*

"Dr. Herman read a letter from Mr. J. Lee Jardine, stating his intention of presenting to the Society a MS. Copy of the '*Speculum Matricis*.'"

*October 8, 1884, meeting.*

"A letter from Dr. Cullingworth was read accompanying a M.S. copy of the *Speculum Matricis* which he had had made at a cost of £3." (This is evidently the inferior MS. now in the Library.)

*June 5, 1888, meeting.*

"It was proposed by Dr. M. Duncan, seconded by the President and unanimously agreed that the best thanks of the Society be given to Mr. J. Lee Jardine for the beautiful transcript of Wolveridge's *Speculum Matricis* which he had made for the Society, and that a copy of this resolution be sent to Mr. Jardine. It was further agreed that the said transcript be well bound."

Signed: JOHN WILLIAMS.

This manuscript is the volume with which this note is mainly concerned. It is contained in a special case and is of quarto size and bound in whole dark morocco. It is a beautiful example of fine writing and drawing with the pen.

It was evidently a labour of love and seems to have occupied the author's leisure hours for nearly four years.

Extract from the *Medical Directory* for 1884.

JARDINE, JOHN LEE, Capel, Dorking, Surrey—M.R.C.S. Eng. and L.S.A. 1850 (St. Thos's) Fell. Meteor. Soc.: Mem. Path. Soc.: Med. Off. Capel Village Hosp.: late Ass. Surg. Brit. Civ. Hosp. Smyrna, and served with Light Cav. at Eupatoria during Crimean war; formerly House Surg. St. Thos's Hosp., Lond. and Hants County Hosp.

I am able to give some further interesting particulars of the transcriber, John Lee Jardine, owing to the kindness of the Rev. Charles Inge, vicar of St. Giles' Church, Oxford, who was so good as to send me, in reply to my inquiries, the following letter:

"I am very glad to give you information about my dear old friend Dr. Jardine. He was living with some nieces of his wife at Holmwood in Surrey where I was vicar. His nieces married and the home was broken up: so we invited him in 1912 to come and live with us. In the following year he moved with us to Oxford and remained with us till his death in 1921.

"He was one of the best and most charming of men—absolutely unselfish and untiring in his kindness. He was a very faithful and devout churchman and did much for the parish of Capel during his long residence there. Of course I only knew him in his old age: he was 79 when I became vicar of Holmwood; but he retained his vigour of mind and body to the last, in a wonderful degree; taking long walks till he was 90 years of age; and losing neither sight nor hearing. He was no mean artist and I have a delightful album full of his drawings and water-colour sketches made on his many travels and ranging in date from 1846 to 1916. The many sketches made during the Crimean war are especially interesting. He was also musical, with a pleasant light tenor voice. He joined the Holmwood choir when he was 84!"

Mr. Inge adds a chronology of Jardine's life from which I extract the following:—

John Lee Jardine was the youngest child of Alexander Jardine and Sarah (Lee) and was born on Oct. 30, 1827 at Brixton Hill. He had seven brothers and sisters who all died as infants or young children except the first-born, Sarah Lee, who lived to the age of 80. His father Alexander Jardine, born Aug. 20, 1780, died April 30, 1848 aged 68. His mother Sarah Lee, born March 24, 1785, died March 24, 1874, aged 89.

In 1834 J. L. J. was at Eastbourne with Bickerdikes.

1839 went to Warley Court by rail and coach.

1843 went to University College School and was bound pupil to Mr. Ord<sup>1</sup> for five years.

<sup>1</sup> Mr. George Ord, father of Dr. Miller Ord: he practised at Brixton Hill for over fifty years.

Spencer: *Wolveridge's "Speculum Matricis"*

1846 entered St. Thomas's Hospital (Oct. 1).

1852 was House Surgeon at Winchester Hospital.

1855 went to Smyrna via Ostend, Cologne, Hanover, Leipzig, Dresden, Prague, Vienna, Laibach, Trieste, Corfu, Cape Matapan, Athens (March 2-19).

In September to Balaclava, Eupatoria till November. 1856-1857 was House Surgeon to St. Thomas's Hospital.

1858 went to Capel, Surrey ("The Cottage").

1863 was appointed Vicar's Churchwarden.

1866 bought Burroughs's practice. On Oct. 2, Capel Church was reopened after restoration and the village Hospital opened by Bishop Sumner of Winchester.

1886 married (Sept. 7) Miss C. E. Morgan.

1900 moved to Dedisham, Rudgwick, Sussex; sold practice to H. Ward Clarke.

1901 went to Braydell Lodge, Wivelsfield.

1903 wife's illness: she died in 1920.

1904 went to Grandon Lodge, Holmwood, the house of his wife's nieces.

1912 to the Vicarage, Holmwood.

1913 to St. Giles' Vicarage, Oxford.

1921 died Nov. 3rd at the beginning of his 95th year and was buried on Nov. 5th in Wolvercote Cemetery, Oxford.

I feel sure the Society will appreciate these biographical details of the author of the Manuscript, kindly given by the Rev. Charles Inge, and will see in them a reason for the rule for not limiting the Membership of the Section of The History of Medicine to the medical profession.